

Federal Communications Commission,

I would like to comment on the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) petition 04-160. Let me start by saying that I am a new subscriber to XM Radio. I signed up for this service in the last thirty days and decided that it was worth the monthly subscription fee and rather significant outlay for the required equipment even though I already own approximately ten devices which receive the "free" FM and AM radio stations. The reason I made this investment and decision to pay a monthly fee was that XM Radio provides a variety of content not available on the commercial FM or AM market in my area. It additionally provides this content in a level of quality that is far superior to FM and AM stations. Where I live and work, I am served by the Washington D.C. radio market, probably one of the larger markets in the country. Even though we have a large number of stations in this market, the homogeneous programming on these stations is mind numbing. In addition to the lack of variation in programming, the excessive commercials were enough to drive me to satellite radio.

Satellite radio's newest traffic and weather services provide another important benefit for the American consumer. They provide a satellite radio listener with the opportunity to get traffic and weather updates 24 hours a day. In case you haven't noticed, FM and AM stations only provide traffic during the morning and evening rush hours. I repeatedly make trips to the eastern shore of Maryland throughout the year. Many of these trips are at non-rush hour times. From my home, I have the option to go through the Washington D.C. or Baltimore metropolitan road systems to get to my destination. Before I had satellite radio, it was a gamble on which route to travel, because it was impossible to obtain a traffic report for these cities during these non-rush hour times. Now with the new traffic services on satellite radio I can listen to the traffic reports for both metropolitan areas before I leave my home. I am convinced that this will save me time from being delayed in congested traffic.

If you rule in favor of the NAB petition, it will harm the 1.8 million satellite radio subscribers in the US. While 1.8 million subscribers is a small percentage of the US population and is probably equivalent to the listeners to some of the largest individual FM stations in the country, let's not forget that these citizens have made the personal decision that satellite radio is worth paying for. The consumer's voice has been heard, their commitment through the purchase of equipment and monthly subscription costs shows that they are dissatisfied with FM and AM stations in their market and that they want the diversity of programming, superior quality, freedom from overwhelming advertising and local traffic and weather provided by satellite radio.

Please reject the NAB's petition 04-160 and protect the American consumer's right to obtain the satellite radio services we desire and pay for!

Regards,  
Jeffrey C. Straits